



November — December 2005

State continues Katrina disaster aid program

Washington's Operation Evergreen continued work through the fall on behalf of a growing number of evacuees from the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast states of Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recorded a slow but steady increase through the fall in the number of disaster registrations with Washington state addresses. Between Oct. 16 and Dec. 18 the number of FEMA registrations rose from 1,759 to 1,903, indicating that the number of individual evacuees had grown from about 5,277 to about 5,709.

Most of the FEMA registrations continued to be concentrated in the Puget Sound region although registration addresses were listed in 35 of the state's 39 counties. King County had the largest number of registrations with 852; followed by Pierce County, 319; Snohomish County, 155; Kitsap County, 91; Clark County, 83; and Spokane County, 79.

Housing was one of the biggest issues confronting both individual evacuees and local, state and federal agencies.

Operation Evergreen brought



Pacific County received TsunamiReady and Storm Ready awards from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service (NWS) Dec. 13 at the county's South Bend courthouse. Ceremony participants included (1-r) John Kaino, county commissioner; Steve Todd, meteorologist in-charge, Portland NWS; Pat Hamilton, county commissioner; Sheriff John Didion; Bud Caffel, county commissioner; and Stephanie Fritts, county emergency manager. (Pacific County photo)

Pacific County TsunamiReady

Pacific County was officially declared a TsunamiReady and Storm-Ready jurisdiction Dec. 13 by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service.

"TsunamiReady arms communities with improved communications, education and safety skills needed to save lives and property," said Tyree Wilde, warning coordination meteorologist in the NWS' Portland office.

"Awareness, preparation and advance warning are vital factors in tsunami readiness," added Stephanie Fritts, Pacific County emergency manager. "Citizens living in shoreline communities on the southwest coast of Washington, such as those in Pacific County, which is an area at risk from earthquakes and tsunamis, must understand the importance of moving to high ground or inland immediately should a tsunami occur."

Governor requests AHAB funding

Washington's coastal counties could obtain an additional 10 All Hazard Alert Broadcasting (AHAB) systems under Gov. Christine Gregoire's proposed 2006 supplemental budget that was announced Dec. 20.

The governor's budget would allocate \$500,000 to the AHAB systems which would be assigned to Pacific, Grays Harbor, Jefferson and Clallam counties. A primary role of the AHAB systems would be to provide tsunami alert and warning to coastal residents and visitors.

Her proposal would double the number of AHAB stations planned for Washington's coast by a federal appropriation approved in November.

"When it comes to emergency preparedness, it's not all about money. It's about how well are you organized? How ready?" Gregoire said.

AHAB stations, which can be powered by battery, wind or solar energy, can be utilized by local, state or federal agencies to emit a voice message or tone alert.

The supplemental budget appropriation "represents a major commitment by Gov. Gregoire to improve our tsunami alert and warning system," said Jim Mullen, Emergency Management Division director.

Shortcomings in Washington's alert and warning systems were highlighted by many coastal county residents after a tsunami warning following an earthquake off the northern

California coast last June failed to reach many communities.

The governor's supplemental budget also allocated \$400,000 to upgrade the University of Washington's Pacific Northwest Seismic Network.

The proposal would expand the University of Washington's capability to provide a real-time map of ground shaking from an earthquake to better direct life safety response and to more precisely estimate earthquake damages and impacts. The updated technology at the UW will boost research into developing tools that might give us an early warning of an earthquake to help us better protect people and critical infrastructure.

Gregoire's budget proposal also calls for:

- \$500,000 to the State Interoperability Executive Committee to help emergency crews across the state to communicate with each other more effectively.
- \$275,000 from the general fund and \$1.2 million from other state accounts for a data center in Eastern Washington that would back up law enforcement and transportation information in the event of an earthquake or other major disaster in the western part of the state.
- Five new positions in the Homeland Security Section of EMD's Programs Unit.

Federal budget funds systems

The U.S. Congress approved funding in November to purchase 10 new All Hazard Alert Broadcasting (AHAB) warning systems for Grays Harbor, Clallam and Pacific counties.

The warning systems tentatively are to be installed by next summer at Long Beach, Ilwaco, Surfside and the Shoalwater Indian Nation in Pacific County; Ocean Shores and Taholah in Grays Harbor County; Clallam Bay and Port Angeles in Clallam County and Port Townsend in Jefferson County.

Two loudspeaker systems are to be allocated to Ocean Shores. "That's where our major coastal population is and their situation is more a concern because there's no close high ground," explained Anne Sullivan, Grays Harbor County Emergency and Risk Manager.

Stephanie Fritts, Pacific County emergency manager, said the new AHAB systems represent a major step to tsunami preparedness in the county.

"It'll have a big impact," she said. "It'll automate a part of the warning process, which will be wonderful because right now we have no automated process other than our reliance on NOAA weather radios."

George Crawford, EMD's earthquake program manager, said the funding is a result of last year's Indian Ocean tsunami and last June's response to a tsunami warning issued for

Hard work begins on Washington's 2006 HLS grant

State and local jurisdictions are hard at work on a comprehensive analysis and justification for Washington's application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2006 Homeland Security grants.

Washington State's justification will be evaluated against other states in a quasi-competitive process, according to Arel Solie, Homeland Security section manager in the Emergency Management Division's Programs Unit.

The stakes are high for Washington which received a \$33 million homeland security grant in FFY 2004 and a \$21.2 million grant in FFY 2005.

"This is a new grant application process that will be challenging to complete by the March 2 national deadline," said Solie. "The process will impact all local jurisdictions, tribal nations and state agencies and will require the state's nine homeland security regions to work collaboratively to identify region-wide initiatives and projects whose funding can be justified in the 2006 grant application."

Solie explained that the state grant justification will include a Program and Capabilities Review that identifies strengths and weaknesses for the following capabilities:

- Intelligence/information sharing and dissemination.
- Explosive device response operations.
- Critical infrastructure protection.



The National Incident Management System implementation was the topic at this breakout session at Emergency Management Division's December workshop for cities, counties, tribal nations, federal and state agencies held at the Tacoma Convention Center. The workshop gathered information for the preparation of the state's 2006 Homeland Security grant application. (EMD Photo)

- Food and agriculture safety and defense.
- Law enforcement investigation and operations.
- Interoperable communications.
- Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear explosive device detection.
- Weapons of mass destruction/hazardous materials response and decontamination.
- Mass protective treatment for the prevention of disease.
- Citizen Preparedness and participation.
- National Incident Management System/National Response Plan.
- Regional collaboration.

- Medical surge capacity.

Solie said a second part of the state's grant justification will be an Enhancement Plan that identifies gaps to be filled in the state's capabilities and the effects of not filling those gaps. A third element of the application will be an investment justification which identifies projects and associated funding to address gaps in the state's capabilities.

A major first step in the development of the state's FFY 06 grant application was a three-day workshop that was attended by more than 250 representatives of cities, counties, tribal nations, federal and state agencies Dec. 12-14 at the Tacoma Convention Center.

State continues Katrina and Rita disaster aid program

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together public agencies, community and faith-based organizations for Housing and Support Workshops Nov. 4 in Tacoma and Nov. 22 in Seattle. About 45 evacuee families received services from more than 70 service providers in Tacoma, and 163 evacuee families were assisted by 208 service providers in Seattle.

At the Emergency Management Division's Camp Murray headquarters, a telephone team overseen by John Vollmer, supervisor of the Human Services section of EMD's Mitigation, Response and Recovery Unit, saw daily calls climb from an average of about 21 calls to 70 calls per day in late November after FEMA announced Nov. 15 it would end its temporary hotel/motel housing program Dec. 1.

Kurt Hardin, state coordinating officer for the Katrina disaster, on Nov. 18 appealed the FEMA decision to Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and made the following requests:

- an extension of the motel/hotel temporary housing until Jan. 7, 2006.
- an extension of the authorization to enter into new interim housing leases through at least Jan. 7, 2006.
- FEMA to honor its original guidance issued in September and October that hous-

ing leases entered into by the state on behalf of the evacuees would be reimbursed for up to 12 months.

Faced with a nationwide protest about the housing deadlines, FEMA extended the deadline on its hotel/motel housing assistance to Dec. 15. To insure that Katrina evacuees know about the FEMA housing deadline, Operation Evergreen on Dec. 7 distributed radio advertisements and public service announcements featuring Garland Robinette, a popular talk show host from WWL Radio in New Orleans.

Federal District Court Judge Stanwood Duval on Dec. 12 in New Orleans granted a temporary restraining order in a class action suit to extend the hotel/motel temporary housing program until at least Jan. 7.

Duval criticized FEMA officials for setting deadlines that he said were unrealistic and in some cases traumatic for Katrina evacuees. "It is unimaginable what anxiety and misery these erratic and bizarre vacillations by FEMA have caused these victims, all of whom, for at least one point in time, had the very real fear of being without shelter for Christmas."

Hardin said he was "guardedly optimistic" that the ruling would give evacuees the necessary time to find interim housing in apartments and houses in the state. But he said the state was still concerned

about the March 1 cutoff of all FEMA housing assistance.

"The interim disaster housing needs to continue for up to 12 months to give evacuees the necessary time to begin to recover from the hurricane disasters of 2005," said Hardin.

UMCD reaches major milestone

Umatilla Chemical Depot recorded an important milestone Dec. 10, reaching the halfway point in the destruction of the depot's 91,442 GB sarin rockets.

Since rocket disposal operations began Sept. 8, 2004, the depot's incinerator has destroyed 45,721 GB rockets.

As the incineration operation attains each processing milestone, we reduce the public risk associated with storing these weapons," said Don Barclay, U.S. Army site project manager for the Umatilla Chemical Agency Disposal Facility. "We are well on our way to destroying all GB rockets by the end of 2006.

Although the rockets destroyed constitute only about seven percent of the Umatilla Depot's original chemical agent stockpile, the GB rocket destruction has reduced the overall storage risk by about 53 percent, Barclay said.

Preparedness conference set

The success of Washington's 2005 Partners in Preparedness Conference will enable it to move to the Tacoma Convention Center for its April 18-20, 2006 event.

Conference attendance annually exceeds 500 persons and has become the largest and most successful regional emergency preparedness conference in the Pacific Northwest.

Guest speakers and lecturers will discuss such topics as pandemic flu; crisis communications; special needs populations; school safety coordination; and the psychological impact of terrorist incidents.

Conference registration begins Feb. 1, 2006. Registration includes all sessions, and conference materials, two lunches and a reception on April 18. Registration by March 1, 2006, is \$225; by March 30, \$275; and after March 30, \$375.

The conference is presented through a partnership between the Washington State Emergency Management Division and the American Red Cross serving King and Kitsap counties. Sponsors include Perkins Coie, Audience Central, Seattle Public Utilities and Puget Sound Energy.

For more information, please call Washington State University Conferences and Professional Programs at 1-800-942-4978, or visit the conference website: <http://capps.wsu.edu/emergencyprep>.



Linda Burton-Ramsey, center, Washington Military Department (WMD) risk manager, was honored for 30 years of state service at her retirement ceremony Nov. 29 at Camp Murray. She was presented awards by Maj. Gen. Frank Scoggins (right), commander, Washington Air National Guard; Jim Peterson, WMD finance director; (left); Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, WMD director; Brig. Gen. Gordon Toney; commander, Washington Army National Guard; and Jim Mullen, Emergency Management Division (EMD) director.

Burton-Ramsey came to EMD in 1991 and served as division director from 1995 to 1998, leading the agency through seven presidentially-declared disasters; the transfer of EMD to the military department from the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and the construction of EMD's headquarters and emergency operations center. Among the awards presented to her at the retirement ceremony were the Washington State Meritorious Service Medal; Washington Air National Guard Meritorious Service Medal; the Adjutant General Medallion; and a certificate, pin and letter from Gov. Christine Gregoire. (WMD Photo)

Pacific County TsunamiReady

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To be recognized as TsunamiReady and StormReady, a jurisdiction must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive tsunami and severe weather warnings and forecasts to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars.
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

Deadlines loom for HLS reports

January 2006 will feature two major deadlines for homeland security reviews and reports.

One deadline is an element of a nationwide review of emergency operations plans, and the second is part of a new reporting system on compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The first deadline falls on Jan. 15 for Washington's submission of its self-assessment of the status of plans for evacuations, the dates such plans were last updated, the dates of exercises last using these plans, the target dates for completion of plans for sustenance of evacuees, and the plans for improvements to address shortcomings in those plans.

Mandated by the Congress and the President in the wake of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, the self-assessment is to be conducted by King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, the city of Seattle, and the state of Washington.

A peer review team will visit Washington by next April 30 to validate results and improvements plans and to identify requirements for technical assistance. A final report of the nationwide plan review is to be submitted to Congress and the President by May 31, 2005.

For information on the emergency plans review for the state and Urban Area Security Initiative region, contact John Ufford of EMD at 253-512-7052.

In regard to NIMS, a quarterly report is to be submitted by Jan. 31 to EMD from state, local and tribal nations to show compliance with NIMS in emergency plans, training, organization and operations.

For information on the NIMS review, contact Jim Kadrmas of EMD at 253-512-7027.

Work begins on 2006 HLS grant

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The state's nine homeland security regions must submit their enhancement plans and investment justifications to EMD by Jan. 11.

These plans and justifications will be assembled into a state application that must go to the Governor's Office by Feb. 1 following reviews by the Committee on Homeland Security, Emergency Management Council and the Governor's Domestic Security Executive Group.

"We recognize that this is a very difficult timeline," said Solie. "However, we are bound by the federal deadlines, and we are committed to submitting a robust application that will make us as competitive as possible in the process."

Hanford event activates EOC

Washington's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated to a Phase III full operations level at 5:45 p.m. Nov. 6 due to an alert emergency declared on the Hanford Site by the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE).

USDOE ordered the alert after an explosion during a contractor cleanup operation at the decommissioned Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) in the Hanford 400 Area, about seven miles northwest of Richland.

Initial USDOE reports stated a contractor was purging the FFTF system with argon gas when a chemical reaction occurred involving a sodium potassium alloy. USDOE reported that a fire alarm sounded, and white smoke was seen escaping from a fuel storage building that was adjacent to the FFTF facility.

Emergency Operations Centers in Benton and Franklin counties were activated, and the USDOE Joint Information Center started operations in their Richland Federal Building facility.

State agencies that responded to the activation included the state Departments of Transportation, Health, Agriculture and Military as well as the Washington State Patrol.

The Washington EOC ended its activation at 1:49 a.m. Nov. 7 after tests indicated that conditions were stable at the FFTF facility.

EMD staff recognition, awards

Littleton Dudley joined EMD on Nov. 16 as the new Exercise and Training Manager in the Planning, Exercise and Training Unit. He came to EMD from the state Department of Retirement Systems and recently returned from a deployment in the Middle East as a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reserve officer.

Terry Egan, manager of the Planning, Exercise and Training Unit, was honored Dec. 1 for his 15 years of state service. He came to EMD in April 1997 from the state Department of Transportation.

Mark Clemens, public information officer, received the Program Manager's Award for Supervisor Service from the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program on Dec. 1. The award honored Clemens' contributions to share best practices throughout the emergency management community and with national public relations professional organizations. Clemens also served as an advisor to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Institute for public information curricula and contributed to the sharing of best practices with the CSEPP Community through the national CSEPP Public Affairs IPT process.

EMD Certificates of Appreciation were presented Dec. 1 to **Michelle Jordan**, Washington Military Department (WMD) payroll manager, for her work to make payroll conversions under the new labor-management contract; and to **Wendy Harris**, WMD accounts payable supervisor, for her work on Emergency Management Assistance Compact deployments.

Bob Isaman, emergency management program specialist 3 in the Planning, Exercise and Training Unit, was honored Dec. 1 for his previous work as equipment grants manager for the Homeland Security Section of the Programs Unit.

Teresa Lewis, secretary administrative in the Enhanced 9-1-1 unit, transferred Jan. 3 to a temporary assignment as a program coordinator I in the Recovery Field Office in Olympia. Her replacement in the 9-1-1 unit will be **Kristin Ramos**.

Venetia N. Mitchell joined EMD Dec. 20 as a temporary secretary administrative in the Programs Unit. She came to EMD from the private sector.

Federal budget funds systems

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coastline of Oregon, Washington and northern California.

The funding was sponsored by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

Each Ahab system costs between \$45,000 and \$50,000 and consists of a loudspeaker topped with a siren and flashing light. When a tsunami warning is issued, the system activates the siren and then broadcasts a warning message.



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The Washington Emergency Management division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, located at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.